Kaylee Mayhew

Mrs. Etheredge

English 10

7 January 2013

Littering in America

According to Keep America Beautiful, “Over 51 billion pieces of litter are found on United States roadways each year” (“Keep America Beautiful”). In other words, our roads contain almost 7,000 pieces of litter per mile. The amount of litter produced in the United States is absurd.

. [](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Littering_in_Stockholm.jpg)

Keep America Beautiful also says, “Litter cleanup costs the U.S almost $11.5 billion each year” (“Keep America Beautiful”). Multiple organizations are working to stop the issue of littering. Littering is harmful to plants animals and people but it can be stopped.

Litter can be an enormous threat to our animals. Animals can swallow or get tangled up in many of the items people leave behind in the environment. Every day, animals get entangled in a careless person’s litter. For example, several seagulls have been found with a plastic 6Pack-holder around their necks. The plastic rubs against the birds’ necks, cutting it. The seagulls die because someone was careless.



Animals harmed by our litter can easily be avoided, by simply cutting up our plastic before throwing it away. Although much of our litter is thrown out on land, most of it ends up in the water, or ends up there because of rain. Marine life is significantly impacted by litter in our oceans. Animals can accidentally eat the trash in the ocean while digesting natural food. Ingestion can result in malnutrition or starvation when the trash collects in the animal's stomach causing the animal to feel as if it were full. Is littering really worth harming our animals?

Littering may not seem like a massive issue to people. The thought crosses people’s minds all the time. “Who cares what happens to the animals, as long as it’s not affecting me?” People may not think that littering affects them when in reality it is a colossal danger to the children of our country. People throw glass bottles into the street and they break, [](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e9/Broken_glass_01_close.JPG)and a child goes outside to play. The child is probably barefoot, because he does not expect anything harmful will happen to them. When in reality it is extremely likely that a piece of glass will go right into his foot.

Not only is it harmful to our children, but it is harmful to us as a country. The amount of money our country spends each year just cleaning up the trash people carelessly throw onto the streets is preposterous, almost $12 billion a year. This money could easily be spent on something more useful to our country, but people refuse to wait a few minutes to properly dispose of trash.

Cigarettes are one of the main objects that people throw into our environment. Keep America Beautiful (KAB) is a national organization, working to protect our environment and end the act of cigarette littering. KAB has implemented a program called the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program. It has a website that shows how a person can begin this project in their [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Filthy_Habit_by_SillyPuttyEnemies.jpg)own community. KAB is a remarkable national organization that will stop at nothing to keep our wildlife safe and “keep America beautiful.” A local organization in Alabama is a program called Adopt a Mile. Adopt a Mile allows any family, organization, or business to literally “adopt a mile” on the Alabama roadways. Once a group has adopted a mile, it is their duty to take care of it. The main duty is to clean up the trash that is thrown onto the side of the streets. The Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State) partnered with the Alabama Department of Transportation to coordinate this program.

People who are unwilling to be a part of a specific organization can still help. A person can always recycle plastic, paper, and cans. Wait until reaching a trash can to throw something away. Pick up a piece of trash that someone else littered. Doing little things can make a great change.

The efforts to end littering are amazing. The amount of people who are changing the habit of littering to protect our environment is growing all the time. Littering is killing our planet and it needs to be stopped. People everywhere are trying to end this issue, so do not litter and save the environment.

Works Cited

"The Alabama Adopt a Mile Program." *Alabama PALS*. Alabama Department of Transportation, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2012.

Cathy. "Walking Green:10 Harmful Effects of Litter." *Greenecoservices*. N.p., 14 June 2008. Web. 08 Dec. 2012. <http://www.greenecoservices.com/walking-green-10-harmful-effects-of-litter/>.

"Keep America Beautiful: Prevent Cigarette Litter." *Keep America Beautiful: Prevent Cigarette Litter*. PhillipMorrisUSA, n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. <http://preventcigarettelitter.org/>.

Kilgore, Melissa. "Litter and Pollution." *Litter and Pollution*. Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2012. <http://www.chintiminiwildlife.org/Education/LivingWithWild/Litter.htm>.

"Litter." *Office of Environment and Heritage*. NSW, 21 Sept. 2012. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/litter.htm>.

"Litter Prevention." *Keep America Beautiful:*. Keep America Beautiful, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2012. <http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=focus\_litter\_prevention>.

"Littering Statistics." *Statistic Brain RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2012. <http://www.statisticbrain.com/littering-statistics/>.

"Marine Debris Impacts." *Home*. USEPA, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2012.